

The Prince George Citizen

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 1990

50 CENTS



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DEAL ENDS BRIDGE BLOCKADE

Oka Mohawks remain defiant



An unarmed soldier talks with Mohawk warriors while barricades at Kahnawake were removed Wednesday.

by Canadian Press

MONTREAL — Two barricades blocking the Mercier Bridge in south-shore Kahnawake were down today but Mohawk Warriors were still standing guard at their blockades in Oka, northwest of Montreal.

Despite the agreement reached between the army and Mohawks to clear passage to the bridge, tired commuters from the area will have to wait several more days before their most direct route to Montreal is re-opened.

A Transport Quebec official said the army will have to ensure safe passage for engineers to inspect the bridge and highways leading to it to assess work that will have to be done before traffic can resume.

The provincial legislature was scheduled to meet in a special session today to pass a law speeding up construction of a highway that would bypass the Kahnawake reserve and the bridge.

Talks to bring down the barricades in Oka continued through the night Wednesday.

Quebec's Native Affairs Minister John Ciaccia, unshaven and exhausted, emerged from the meeting at dawn today and said "we should take it one step at a time."

"That's why we agreed to continue, hopefully, some time later today."

Until now, talks between the government and Mohawks have often broken off early because of Mohawk insistence that no serious negotiations should occur after sundown.

But Kahnawake Grand Chief Joe Norton said "I guess there comes a time when certain customary laws have to be broken. We thought it was important enough."

There were still several sticking points, he said, but "there are quite a lot of issues we've agreed to in principle."

The army and police remained in place outside both Mohawk communities and a military reconnaissance helicopter clattered over the Kahnawake settlement in Oka all night.

"We have their phone number and they have ours," said Canadian Forces spokesman Capt. Yvon Desjardins. "If anybody wants to talk to anybody they just have to dial."

A flesh-colored mask with long strands of hair still stood on a pole today at the main barricade in Oka. Natives say the mask, placed by Mohawk negotiator Ellen Gabriel, symbolizes the hope for peace and protection for the Mohawk people.

Meanwhile, residents of suburban Chateaugay were talking about revenge.

"It's not finished yet," said Stephane, leaning on a bicycle as about 1,000 Chateaugay residents gawked at the dismantling of a nearby Indian barricade. "The Warriors are going to want revenge here in Chateaugay."

Bank rate

OTTAWA (CP) — The Bank of Canada bank rate fell below 13 per cent today for the first time since February.

The bank rate slipped to 12.92 per cent from 13.01 per cent.

INDIAN DISPUTE

Progress cheered

Local Native leaders and spokesmen for non-natives are welcoming the positive moves under way to settle the seven-week old armed standoff at Oka, Quebec.

"We still support the people of Oka and the conditions and demands of their negotiations because we want a settlement that is fair and just so my kids and grandchildren can live in a fair and equal situation," Justa Monk, the chief of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, said today.

Although the Quebec dispute has led to demonstrations and the erecting of barricades throughout B.C., Monk says local Native leaders have adopted a low-key, non-violent approach to the dispute by concentrating their efforts on educating the public by speaking to community leaders and public groups whenever they are invited.

Prince George-Peace River MP Frank Oberle says he's relieved progress is being made to resolve the simmering dispute which, earlier this week, seemed to be heading toward a bitter battle.

He admitted there is a lot of misunderstanding on both sides of the issue but said he hoped all Canadians would learn from the experience.

"It is not something non-Natives can learn quickly but I feel we must move to bridge the cultural gap so we can understand their spiritual attachment to the land."

"Put yourself in the moccasins of the Natives. Their culture has survived for a long time and we have to allow them to go back and build a future life despite what we have unwittingly done," he said.

On the other hand, Natives have to understand population pressures make it impossible for them to return to their traditional lifestyle, he said.

Although the situation is cooling down, Norman Unrau, the unofficial local spokesman for the United Citizens of B.C. (UCBC) continues to be upset because non-Natives don't have enough information about what is going on and the way the dispute is ruining relationships between Natives and non-Natives.

"I'm happy things are cooling down because I didn't want to see this developing into total chaos," Unrau said today.

UCBC was established during the dispute by Colleen Reynolds of Lillooet in an effort to put forward non-Native concerns about the extent of the Native land claims in this province.

No more bumpy rides along North Nechako

Prince George residents using the North Nechako Road had a treat in store Wednesday when a \$180,000 road improvement project was completed.

The approximate 300-metre, newly-paved section had been a trouble spot for months when construction of new a condominium complex along the stretch required the road to be torn up for a sewer extension.

At the same time, the city put in a new road base, widened sections and smoothed out sharp curves.

Last May, frost heaves and potholes became so severe, the road was closed for a short time.

Street work in the city should end this season about Sept. 15 in South Fort George where a \$140,000 curbing and a \$230,000 paving project will be completed,

said city engineer Ernie Obst.

The city also spent \$122,000 paving the Western Acres gravel frontage road and \$950,000 on "rehabilitation paving" along Massey and Westwood Drives, Northwood Pulp Road, Upland Street, McGill Crescent and Third and Fourth Avenues.

Although this year's work "is certainly going to help" the overall condition of the city street network, we still have a long way to go, said Obst.

"Every year we lose a little ground when deterioration of streets now 20 years old is greater than our rehabilitation program."

Obst would like to see a bigger budget for street rehabilitation and maintenance, but realizes "there's just so much money to go around, so we do the best we can."

More immigration urged

TORONTO (CP) — Immigration Minister Barbara McDougall wants to let immigration jump to its highest level in 35 years, a secret government document says.

McDougall told a cabinet committee that annual immigration levels should rise 51 per cent to 265,000 people by 1992, says a June 5 memorandum obtained by the Toronto Star.

Immigration hit its highest level this century in 1910 when Canada

let in more than 400,000 people. The second highest mark was in 1957 when about 282,000 immigrants arrived.

The secret memo also suggests McDougall hopes to restrict reunification of families so that more skilled workers can come here.

A senior aide to McDougall refused to say Wednesday whether the briefing document is accurate.

"I can tell you there has been no decision," said Ruth Archibald,

THE GULF CRISIS

Withdrawal deal denied

From AP-Reuters-CP-AFP
Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, saying Iraq has God on its side and will never be defeated, has denied seeking a deal for an Iraqi withdrawal from conquered Kuwait despite mounting international military and economic pressure.

Canada and other countries waited today to see if Iraq would indeed allow western women and children to leave as it had promised, and UN chief Javier Perez de Cuellar headed for talks in Jordan with Iraq's foreign minister, Tariq Aziz.

Meanwhile, diplomats in Baghdad

said today Iraq is demanding that foreign planes bring food and medicine if they want to fly out westers.

The diplomatic sources said planes that don't carry such supplies won't be allowed to land in the Iraqi capital. Instead, they said western women and children will have to travel in convoys overland, most likely to the Turkish border about 650 kilometres from Baghdad.

At Meech Lake, Que., External Affairs Minister Joe Clark said officials plan to bring out Canadians by truck because airports in Iraq

and Kuwait are closed.

However, it might take several days to arrange any kind of transportation to help an estimated 130 to 140 Canadian dependents leave Iraq and Kuwait for Jordan or Turkey, Clark said. About 600 Canadians are in Iraq and 200 in Kuwait.

In Amman, a 17-year-old British girl and a pregnant Spanish woman flew into the Jordanian capital today from Baghdad. A Lebanese man with a French passport, a British journalist and some Brazilians were also aboard the Iraqi Airways plane. No other westerners were sighted, witnesses said.

In Baghdad, the diplomats said that by noon local time today, no western women and children had received exit visas. The visas are being held up, pending a response from foreign governments to the demand for food and medicines, the sources said.

One senior diplomat involved in talks with the Iraqis said: "No one expects any development before Saturday."

A Canadian family of four and a Canadian diplomat's wife were among a handful of westerners who arrived in Amman on Wednesday on a flight from Baghdad. However, the Canadians had received permission to leave prior to Saddam's decision to free foreign women and children.

The External Affairs Department estimates about 55 Canadians have left Iraq and Iraqi-occupied Kuwait since the Iraqi invasion Aug. 2.

A U.S. diplomatic source confirmed See GULF, page 2

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